

Natural Communities of Louisiana



Coastal Live Oak-Hackberry Forest

Rarity Rank: S1S2/G2

	1	2	3	4	5
State					
Global					
	imperiled		rare		secure

Synonyms: Cheniere, Maritime Forest

Ecological Systems: CES203.466 West Gulf Coastal Plain Chenier and Upper Texas Coastal Fringe Forest and Woodland



General Description:

- Coastal Live Oak-Hackberry Forest or Cheniere (French for "place of oaks") formed on abandoned beach ridges primarily in southwest Louisiana
- These ancient beaches were stranded via deltaic sedimentation by the constantly shifting Mississippi River
- Composed primarily of fine sandy loams with sand and shell layers or deposits, these ridges range in height from 4 to 5 feet above sea level
- Soils of medium fertility; high permeability
- Serve as important storm barriers limiting saltwater intrusion into freshwater habitats. Typically, marshes north of chenieres are fresher than those gulfward
- Important wildlife habitat and serves as vital resting habitat for trans-gulf-migrating birds

Plant Community Associates:

Common overstory tree species include:

Quercus virginiana (live oak)
Gleditsia triacanthos (honeylocust)
Zanthoxylum clava-herculis (toothache tree)
Salix nigra (black willow)

Celtis laevigata (hackberry or sugarberry)
Ulmus americana (American elm)
Carya illinoensis (sweet pecan)

Common midstory & understory species include:

Crataegus viridis (green hawthorn)
Sabal minor (palmetto)
Sideroxylon lanuginosum (chittim wood)
Cephalanthus occidentalis (buttonbush)

Diospyros virginiana (persimmon)
Ilex decidua (deciduous holly)
Morella cerifera (wax myrtle)
Ilex vomitoria (yaupon)

Common herbaceous layer species include:

Opuntia spp. (prickly pear cactus)
Ampelopsis arborea (peppervine)
Toxicodendron radicans (poison ivy)
Parthenocissus quinquefolia (Virginia creeper)

Oplismenus hirtellus (basket grass)
Vitis spp. (wild grape)
Campsis radicans (trumpet creeper)

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Common epiphytes include:

Tillandsia usneoides (Spanish moss)

Polypodium polypodioides (resurrection fern)

Phoradendron tomentosum (mistle-toe)

Federally-listed plant & animal species:

None

Range:

Louisiana's coastal chenier forests occur in the Chenier Plain from Iberia Parish westward across Vermilion and Cameron parishes. Of the original 100,000 to 500,000 acres in Louisiana, only 2,000 to 10,000 acres remain, 2-10 % of presettlement extent

LA River Basins:

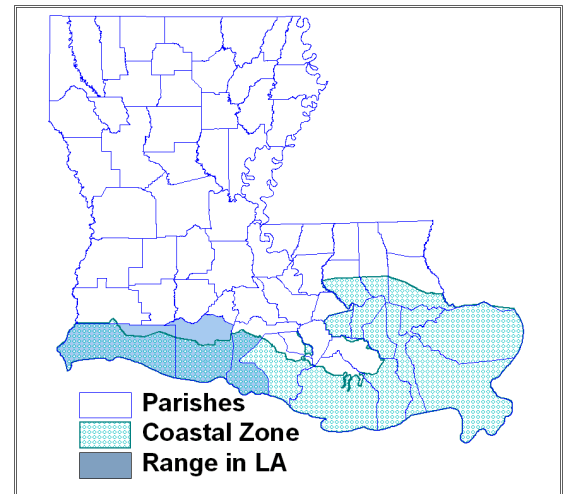
Vermilion-Teche, Mermentau, Calcasieu, Sabine

Threats:

- Residential development
- Roads and utility construction
- Overgrazing which damages understory vegetation and inhibits natural stand regeneration
- Invasive and exotic species introduction

Beneficial Management Practices:

- Prevent conversion of existing natural forests to other land uses
- Prohibit livestock grazing
- Remove any invasive exotic plant species with use of spot herbicides or mechanical means



Magnolia Warbler (*Dendroica magnolia*) is one of the migratory bird species that utilize coastal live oak-hackberry forests

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For more information, please visit our Web pages at

www.wlf.louisiana.gov/experience/naturalheritage or 225-765-2811

www.BTNEP.org or 1-800-259-0869